

PATENT
2577-0106P

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: George N. VALKANAS et al. CONC. NO.: 7933
SERIAL NO: 09/205,297 GROUP: 1724
FILED: December 4, 1998 EXAMINER: I. Cintins
FOR: METHOD AND PRODUCTS TO ABSORB OIL AND ORGANIC SOLVENTS FROM WATER AND FROM SEA

DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.132

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

I, Ioannis Konstantakopoulos, declare the following.

I am a co-inventor of the disclosure of the above-captioned application. I am fully knowledgeable of the disclosure of the application and field of art of the present invention. I have read and understand the Office Action dated November 6, 2001 and the references cited therein, i.e., Meitzner et al., USP 4,297,220, Vulliez-Sermet et al., USP 3,979,287, Rosenbaum, USP 5,460,792, and Schwarz et al., USP 5,017,436.

The present invention is drawn to a macroreticular polymer, a process for preparing said macroreticular polymer, and the use of said macroreticular polymer as an absorbent. One of the preferred uses of the inventive absorbent is in the removal of

Application No.: 09/205,197

oily pollution resulting from spillage from tanker ships. The inventive macroreticular polymers can absorb up to 30 to 60 times their weight of oil and organic solvents intermolecularly. An important aspect of the present invention is that the macroreticular crosslink polymers have an "Mc" of 50,000. "Mc" is known to the skilled artisan as being a measure of the molecular weight along the polymer between crosslinks, and is strongly related to the absorption capability of the crosslinked polymer.

In order to obtain crosslinked polymers having an Mc of 50,000, the inventive process involves the crosslinking of **preformed** polymers. This is a post-polymerization crosslinking step.

In each of the cited references, the crosslinking reaction is performed at the same time as the polymerization reaction. In my opinion, the concurrent polymerization and crosslinking reactions would not give an Mc of 50,000. Accordingly, the inventive macroreticular crosslinked polymers are structurally distinct from the polymers of the cited references. Since none of Meitzner et al., Vulliez-Sermet et al., Rosenbaum or Schwarz et al. teach or suggest to perform the crosslinking reaction in a post polymerization step, the presently claimed macroreticular

Application No.: 09/205,297

product having an Mn of 50,000, is not made obvious by the cited references.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

This 24 day of Jan, 2002

By: I.C. Constantinopoulos